

# JAPANESE PRINTS

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER







THESE Imagist poems, which embody Mr. Fletcher's latest and most mature work, are written after certain designs of the Uki-oye or Passing World school of Japanese prints. In an interesting preface on Japanese poetry, Mr. Fletcher says: "The object of this school was some universalized emotion derived from a natural fact. Its achievement was the expression of that emotion in the fewest possible terms. It is therefore necessary, if poetry in the English tongue is ever to attain again to the vitality and strength of its beginnings, that we sit at the feet of the Orient and learn from it how little words can express, how sparingly they should be used, and how much is contained in the meanest natural object."

Those who are familiar with Mr. Fletcher's work know that he is able with a peculiar skill to express much in little, and to set some one thought in a brief poem of unusual beauty. These *Japanese Prints* abound in effects of color, tone, and even odor, and continually astonish with passages that seem perfect in their brief lyric intensity of emotion.

"For the discerning eye," says Amy Lowell in *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*, "no living poet has more distinction of vision or style. In him, indeed, we see the beginning of that new order of which I have so often spoken. To the poet, he is a real teacher. Indicating new directions, opening up untrodden ways of thought."

*Japanese Prints*

*By John Gould Fletcher*

***Japanese Prints  
Goblins and Pagodas  
Irradiations: Sand and Spray***







D. P. LaFrop



# *Japanese Prints*

*By*

*John Gould Fletcher*

*With Illustrations By*

*Dorothy Puls Lathrop*



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*To My Wife*

*Granted this dew-drop world be but a dew-drop world,  
This granted, yet —*





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## *Preface*

**A**T the earliest period concerning which we have any accurate information, about the sixth century A. D., Japanese poetry already contained the germ of its later development.

The poems of this early date were composed of a first line of five syllables, followed by a second of seven, followed by a third of five, and so on, always ending with a line of seven syllables followed by another of equal number. Thus the whole poem, of whatever length (a poem of as many as forty-nine lines was scarce, even at that day) always was composed of an odd number of lines, alternating in length of syllables from five to seven, until the close, which was an extra seven syllable line. Other rules there were none. Rhyme, quantity, accent, stress were disregarded. Two vowels together must never be sounded as a diphthong, and a long vowel counts for two syllables, likewise a final “n”, and the consonant “m” in some cases.

This method of writing poetry may seem to the reader to suffer from serious disadvantages. In reality this was not the case. Contrast it for a moment with the undignified welter of undigested and ex parte



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theories which academic prosodists have tried for three hundred years to foist upon English verse, and it will be seen that the simple Japanese rule has the merit of dignity. The only part of it that we Occidentals could not accept perhaps, with advantage to ourselves, is the peculiarly Oriental insistence on an odd number of syllables for every line and an odd number of lines to every poem. To the Western mind, odd numbers sound incomplete. But to the Chinese (and Japanese art is mainly a highly-specialized expression of Chinese thought), the odd numbers are masculine and hence heavenly; the even numbers feminine and hence earthy. This idea in itself, the antiquity of which no man can tell, deserves no less than a treatise be written on it. But the place for that treatise is not here.

To return to our earliest Japanese form. Sooner or later this crystallized into what is called a *tanka* or short ode. This was always five lines in length, constructed syllabically 5, 7, 5, 7, 7, or thirty-one syllables in all. Innumerable numbers of these *tanka* were written. Gradually, during the feudal period, improvising verses became a pastime in court circles. Some one would utter the first three lines of a *tanka* and some one else would cap the composition by adding the last two. This division persisted. The first hemistich which was composed of 17 syllables grew to be called the *hokku*, the second or finishing hemi-

## Preface

stich of 14 syllables was called ageku. Thus was born the form which is more peculiarly Japanese than any other, and which only they have been able to carry to perfection.

Composing hokku might, however, have remained a mere game of elaborate literary conceits and double meanings, but for the genius of one man. This was the great Bashō (1644-1694) who may be called certainly the greatest epigrammatist of any time. During a life of extreme and voluntary self-denial and wandering, Bashō contrived to obtain over a thousand disciples, and to found a school of hokku writing which has persisted down to the present day. He reformed the hokku, by introducing into everything he wrote a deep spiritual significance underlying the words. He even went so far as to disregard upon occasion the syllabic rule, and to add extraneous syllables, if thereby he might perfect his statement. He set his face sternly against impromptus, *poemes d'occasion*, and the like. The number of his works were not large, and even these he perpetually sharpened and polished. His influence persisted for long after his death. A disciple and priest of Zen Buddhism himself, his work is permeated with the feeling of that doctrine.

Zen Buddhism, as Bashō practised it, may be called religion under the forms of nature. Everything on earth, from the clouds in the sky to the

## *Japanese Prints*

pebble by the roadside, has some spiritual or ethical significance for us. Blake's words describe the aim of the Zen Buddhist as well as any one's:

“To see a World in a grain of sand,  
And a Heaven in a wild flower;  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
And Eternity in an hour.”

Bashō would have subscribed to this as the sole rule of poetry and imagination. The only difference between the Western and the Eastern mystic is that where one sees the world in the grain of sand and tells you all about it, the other sees and lets his silence imply that he knows its meaning. Or to quote Lao-tzu: “Those who speak do not know, those who know do not speak.” It must always be understood that there is an implied continuation to every Japanese hokku. The concluding hemistich, whereby the hokku becomes the tanka, is existent in the writer's mind, but never uttered.

Let us take an example. The most famous hokku that Bashō wrote, might be literally translated thus:

“An old pond  
And the sound of a frog leaping  
Into the water.”

This means nothing to the Western mind. But to the Japanese it means all the beauty of such a life of retirement and contemplation as Bashō practised. If we permit our minds to supply the detail Bashō de-



## *Preface*

liberately omitted, we see the mouldering temple enclosure, the sage himself in meditation, the ancient piece of water, and the sound of a frog's leap—passing vanity—slipping into the silence of eternity. The poem has three meanings. First it is a statement of fact. Second, it is an emotion deduced from that. Third, it is a sort of spiritual allegory. And all this Bashō has given us in his seventeen syllables.

All of Bashō's poems have these three meanings. Again and again we get a sublime suggestion out of some quite commonplace natural fact. For instance:

“On the mountain-road

There is no flower more beautiful

Than the wild violet.”

The wild violet, scentless, growing hidden and neglected among the rocks of the mountain-road, suggested to Bashō the life of the Buddhist hermit, and thus this poem becomes an exhortation to “shun the world, if you would be sublime.”

I need not give further examples. The reader can now see for himself what the main object of the hokku poetry is, and what it achieved. Its object was some universalized emotion derived from a natural fact. Its achievement was the expression of that emotion in the fewest possible terms. It is therefore necessary, if poetry in the English tongue is ever to attain again to the vitality and strength of its beginnings, that we sit once more at the feet of the

## *Japanese Prints*

Orient and learn from it how little words can express, how sparingly they should be used, and how much is contained in the meanest natural object. Shakespeare, who could close a scene of brooding terror with the words: "But see, the morn in russet mantle clad, Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill" was nearer to the oriental spirit than we are. We have lost Shakespeare's instinct for nature and for fresh individual vision, and we are unwilling to acquire it through self-discipline. If we do not want art to disappear under the froth of shallow egotism, we must learn the lesson Bashō can teach us.

That is not to say, that, by taking the letter for the spirit, we should in any way strive to imitate the hokku form. Good hokkus cannot be written in English. The thing we have to follow is not a form, but a spirit. Let us universalize our emotions as much as possible, let us become impersonal as Shakespeare or Bashō was. Let us not gush about our fine feelings. Let us admit that the highest and noblest feelings are things that cannot be put into words. Therefore let us conceal them behind the words we have chosen. Our definition of poetry would then become that of Edwin Arlington Robinson, that poetry is a language which tells through a reaction upon our emotional natures something which cannot be put into words. Unless we set ourselves seriously to the task of understanding that language is only a means and never an

## *Preface*

end, poetic art will be dead in fifty years, from a surfeit of superficial cleverness and devitalized realism.

In the poems that follow I have taken as my subjects certain designs of the so-called Uki-oye (or Passing World) school. These prints, made and produced for purely popular consumption by artists who, whatever their genius, were despised by the literati of their time, share at least one characteristic with Japanese poetry, which is, that they exalt the most trivial and commonplace subjects into the universal significance of works of art. And therefore I have chosen them to illustrate my doctrine, which is this: that one must learn to do well small things before doing things great; that the universe is just as much in the shape of a hand as it is in armies, politics, astronomy, or the exhortations of gospel-mongers; that style and technique rest on the thing conveyed and not the means of conveyance; and that though sentiment is a good thing, understanding is a better. As for the poems themselves they are in some cases not Japanese at all, but all illustrate something of the charm I have found in Japanese poetry and art. And if they induce others to seek that charm for themselves, my purpose will have been attained.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.





## *Part I*





## *Lovers Embracing*

Force and yielding meet together:  
An attack is half repulsed.  
Shafts of broken sunlight dissolving  
Convolutions of torpid cloud.

## *A Picnic Under the Cherry Trees*

The boat drifts to rest  
Under the outward spraying branches.

There is faint sound of quavering strings,  
The reedy murmurs of a flute,  
The soft sigh of the wind through silken garments;

All these are mingled  
With the breeze that drifts away,  
Filled with thin petals of cherry blossom,  
Like tinkling laughter dancing away in sunlight.

## *Court Lady Standing Under Cherry Tree*

She is an iris,  
Dark purple, pale rose,  
Under the gnarled boughs  
That shatter their stars of bloom.  
She waves delicately  
With the movement of the tree.

Of what is she dreaming?

Of long nights lit with orange lanterns,  
Of wine cups and compliments and kisses of the  
    two-sword men.  
And of dawn when weary sleepers  
Lie outstretched on the mats of the palace,  
And of the iris stalk that is broken in the fountain.

## *Court Lady Standing Under a Plum Tree*

Autumn winds roll through the dry leaves  
On her garments;  
Autumn birds shiver  
Athwart star-hung skies.  
Under the blossoming plum-tree,  
She expresses the pilgrimage  
Of grey souls passing,  
Athwart love's scarlet maples  
To the ash-strewn summit of death.



## *A Beautiful Woman*

Iris-amid-clouds  
Must be her name.

Tall and lonely as the mountain-iris,  
Cold and distant.

She has never known longing:  
Many have died for love of her.

## *A Reading*

“And the prince came to the craggy rock  
But saw only hissing waves  
So he rested all day amid them.”

He listens idly,  
He is content with her voice.

He dreams it is the murmur  
Of distant wave-caps breaking  
Upon the painted screen.

## *An Actor as a Dancing Girl*

The peony dancer  
Swirls orange folds of dusty robes  
Through the summer.

They are spotted with thunder showers,  
Falling upon the crimson petals.

Heavy blooms  
Breaking and spilling fiery cups  
Drowsily.

## *Josan No Miya*

She is a fierce kitten leaping in sunlight  
Towards the swaying boughs.

She is a gust of wind,  
Bending in parallel curves the boughs of the willow-  
tree.

## *An Oiran and her Kamuso*

Gilded hummingbirds are whizzing  
Through the palace garden,  
Deceived by the jade petals  
Of the Emperor's jewel-trees.



## *Two Ways of Love*

The wind half blows her robes,  
That subside  
Listlessly  
As swaying pines.

The wind tosses hers  
In circles  
That recoil upon themselves:  
How should I love—as the swaying or tossing wind?

## *Kurenai-ye or "Red Picture"*

She glances expectantly  
Through the pine avenue,  
To the cherry-tree summit  
Where her lover will appear.

Faint rose anticipation colours her,  
And sunset;  
She is a cherry-tree that has taken long to bloom.

*A Woman Standing by a Gate with an  
Umbrella*

Late summer changes to autumn:  
Chrysanthemums are scattered  
Behind the palings.

Gold and vermilion  
The afternoon.

I wait here dreaming of vermilion sunsets:  
In my heart is a half fear of the chill autumn rain.

## *Scene from a Drama*

The daimyo and the courtesan  
Compliment each other.

He invites her to walk out through the maples,  
She half refuses, hiding fear in her heart.

Far in the shadow  
The daimyo's attendant waits,  
Nervously fingering his sword.

## *A Woman in Winter Costume*

She is like the great rains  
That fall over the earth in winter-time.

Wave on wave her heavy robes collapse  
In green torrents  
Lashed with slaty foam.

Downward the sun strikes amid them  
And enkindles a lone flower;  
A violet iris standing yet in seething pools of grey.



## *A Pedlar*

Gaily he offers  
Packets of merchandise.

He is a harlequin of illusions,  
His nimble features  
Skip into smiles, like rainbows,  
Cheating the villagers.

But in his heart all the while is another knowledge,  
The sorrow of the bleakness of the long wet winter  
night.

## *Kiyonobu and Kiyomasu Contrasted*

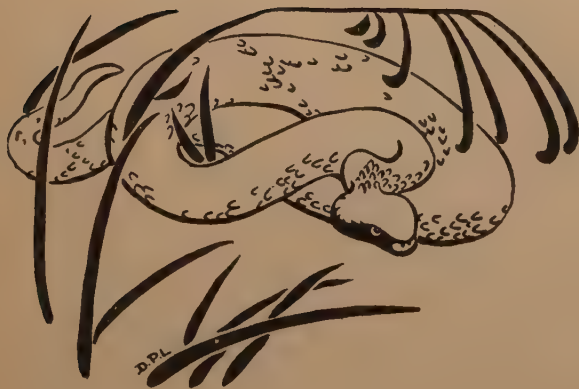
One life is a long summer ;  
Tall hollyhocks stand proud upon its paths ;  
Little yellow waves of sunlight,  
Bring scarlet butterflies.

Another life is a brief autumn,  
Fierce storm-rack scrawled with lightning  
Passed over it  
Leaving the naked bleeding earth,  
Stabbed with the swords of the rain.

## *An Actor*

He plots for he is angry,  
He sneers for he is bold.

He clinches his fist  
Like a twisted snake;  
Coiling itself, preparing to raise its head,  
Above the long grasses of the plain.







## *Part II*



## *Memory and Forgetting*

I have forgotten how many times he kissed me,  
But I cannot forget  
A swaying branch—a leaf that fell  
To earth.

## *Pillar-Print, Masonobu*

He stands irresolute  
Cloaking the light of his lantern.

Tonight he will either find new love or a sword-thrust,  
But his soul is troubled with ghosts of old regret.

Like vines with crimson flowers  
They climb  
Upwards  
Into his heart.



## *The Young Daimyo*

When he first came out to meet me,  
He had just been girt with the two swords;  
And I found he was far more interested in the glitter  
    of their hilts,  
And did not even compare my kiss to a cherry-  
    blossom.

## *Masonubu — Early*

She was a dream of moons, of fluttering handker-  
chiefs,  
Of flying leaves, of parasols,  
A riddle made to break my heart;  
The lightest impulse  
To her was more dear than the deep-toned temple bell.  
She fluttered to my sword-hilt an instant,  
And then flew away;  
But who will spend all day chasing a butterfly?

## *The Beautiful Geisha*

Swift waves hissing  
Under the moonlight;  
Tarnished silver.

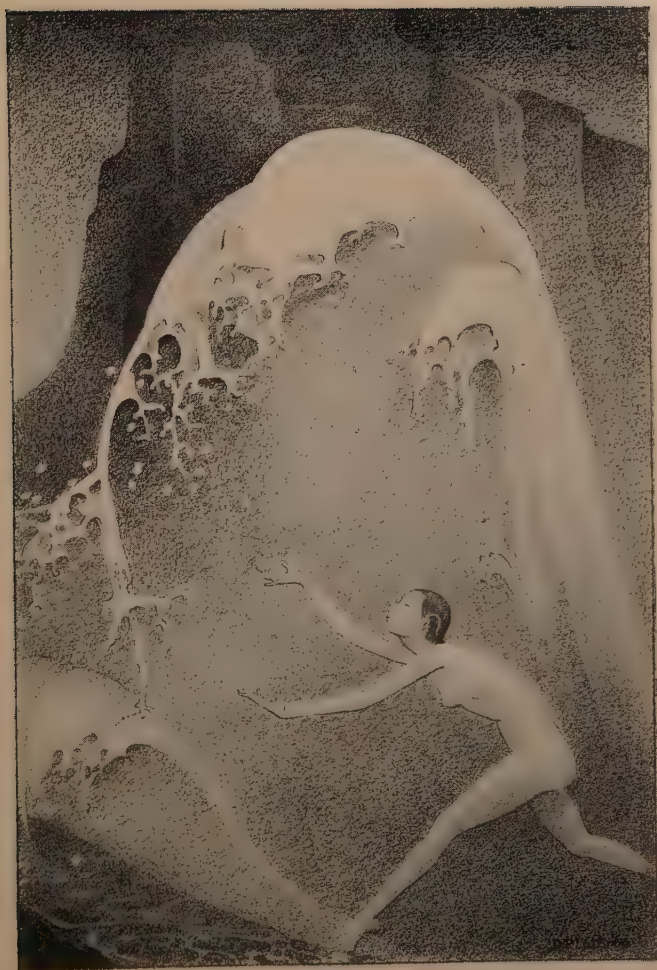
Swaying boats  
Under the moonlight,  
Gold lacquered prows.

Is it a vision  
Under the moonlight?  
No, it is only  
A beautiful geisha swaying down the street.

## *A Young Girl*

Out of the rings and the bubbles,  
The curls and the swirls of the water,  
Out of the crystalline shower of drops shattered in  
play, . . .  
Her body and her thoughts arose.

She dreamed of some lover  
To whom she might offer her body  
Fresh and cool as a flower born in the rain.





## *The Heavenly Poetesses*

In their bark of bamboo reeds  
The heavenly poetesses  
Float across the sky.

Poems are falling from them  
Swift as the wind that shakes the lance-like bamboo  
leaves;  
The stars close around like bubbles  
Stirred by the silver oars of poems passing.

## *The Old Love and the New*

Beware, for the dying vine can hold  
The strongest oak.

Only by cutting at the root  
Can love be altered.

Late in the night  
A rosy glimmer yet defies the darkness. .

But the evening is growing late,  
The blinds are being lowered;  
She who held your heart and charmed you  
Is only a rosy glimmer of flame remembered.



## *Fugitive Thoughts*

My thoughts are sparrows passing  
Through one great wave that breaks  
In bubbles of gold on a black motionless rock.

## *Disappointment*

Rain rattles on the pavement,  
Puddles stand in the bluish stones;  
Afar in the Yoshiwara  
Is she who holds my heart.

Alas, the torn lantern of my hope  
Trembles and sputters in the rain

## *The Traitor*

I saw him pass at twilight;  
He was a dark cloud travelling  
Over palace roofs  
With one claw drooping.

In his face were written ages  
Of patient treachery  
And the knowledge of his hour.

One dainty thrust, no more  
Than this, he needs.

## *The Fop*

His heart is like a wind  
Torn between cloud and butterfly;  
Whether he will roll passively to one,  
Or chase endlessly the other.

## *Changing Love*

My love for her at first was like the smoke that drifts  
Across the marshes  
From burning woods.

But, after she had gone,  
It was like the lotus that lifts up  
Its heart shaped buds from the dim waters.

## *In Exile*

My heart is mournful as thunder moving  
Through distant hills  
Late on a long still night of autumn.

My heart is broken and mournful  
As rain heard beating  
Far off in the distance  
While earth is parched more near.

On my heart is the black badge of exile;  
I droop over it,  
I accept its shame.

## *The True Conqueror*

He only can bow to men  
Lofty as a god  
To those beneath him,  
Who has taken sins and sorrows  
And whose deathless spirit leaps  
Beneath them like a golden carp in the torrent.

## *Spring Love*

Through the weak spring rains  
Two lovers walk together,  
Holding together the parasol.

But the laughing rains of spring  
Will break the weak green shoots of their love.

His will grow a towering stalk,  
Hers, a cowering flower under it.



## *The Endless Lament*

Spring rain falls through the cherry blossom,  
In long blue shafts  
On grasses strewn with delicate stars.

The summer rain sifts through the drooping willow,  
Shatters the courtyard  
Leaving grey pools.

The autumn rain drives through the maples  
Scarlet threads of sorrow,  
Towards the snowy earth.

Would that the rains of all the winters  
Might wash away my grief!

## *Toyonobu. Exile's Return*

The cranes have come back to the temple,  
The winds are flapping the flags about,  
Through a flute of reeds  
I will blow a song.

Let my song sigh as the breeze through the crypto-  
merias,  
And pause like long flags flapping,  
And dart and flutter aloft, like a wind-bewildered  
crane.





## *Wind and Chrysanthemum*

Chrysanthemums bending  
Before the wind.

Chrysanthemums wavering  
In the black choked grasses.

The wind frowns at them,  
He tears off a green and orange stalk of broken  
chrysanthemum.

The chrysanthemums spread their flattered heads,  
And scurry off before the wind.

## *The Endless Pilgrimage*

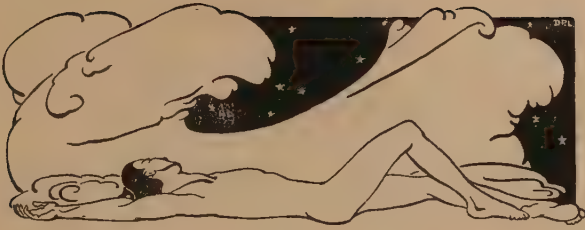
Storm-birds of autumn  
With draggled wings:

Sleet-beaten, wind-tattered, snow-frozen,  
Stopping in sheer weariness  
Between the gnarled red pine trees  
Twisted in doubt and despair;

Whence do you come, pilgrims,  
Over what snow fields?  
To what southern province  
Hidden behind dim peaks, would you go?

"Too long were the telling  
Wherefore we set out;  
And where we will find rest  
Only the Gods may tell."





### *Part III*





## *The Clouds*

Although there was no sound in all the house,  
I could not forbear listening for the cry of those long  
white rippling waves  
Dragging up their strength to break on the sullen  
beach of the sky.

## *Two Ladies Contrasted*

The harmonies of the robes of this gay lady  
Are like chants within a temple sweeping outwards  
To the morn.

But I prefer the song of the wind by a stream  
Where a shy lily half hides itself in the grasses;  
To the night of clouds and stars and wine and  
passion,  
In a palace of tessellated restraint and splendor.

## *A Night Festival*

Sparrows and tame magpies chatter  
In the porticoes  
Lit with many a lantern.

There is idle song,  
Scandal over full wine cups,  
Sorrow does not matter.

Only beyond the still grey shoji  
For the breadth of innumerable countries,  
Is the sea with ships asleep  
In the blue-black starless night.

## *Distant Coasts*

A squall has struck the sea afar off.  
You can feel it quiver  
Over the paper parasol  
With which she shields her face ;

In the drawn-together skirts of her robes,  
As she turns to meet it.

## *On the Banks of the Sumida*

Windy evening of autumn,  
By the grey-green swirling river,  
People are resting like still boats  
Tugging uneasily at their cramped chains.

Some are moving slowly  
Like the easy winds:

Brown-blue, dull-green, the villages in the distance  
Sleep on the banks of the river:  
The waters sullenly clash and murmur.  
The chatter of the passersby,  
Is dulled beneath the grey unquiet sky.

## *Yoshiwara Festival*

The green and violet peacocks  
With golden tails  
Parade.

Beneath the fluttering jangling streamers  
They walk  
Violet and gold.

The green and violet peacocks  
Through the golden dusk  
Showered upon them from the vine-hung lanterns,  
Stately, nostalgically,  
Parade.

## *Sharaku Dreams*

I will scrawl on the walls of the night  
Faces.

Leering, sneering, scowling, threatening faces;  
Weeping, twisting, yelling, howling faces;  
Faces fixed in a contortion between a scream and a  
    laugh,  
Meaningless faces.

I will cover the walls of night  
With faces,  
Till you do not know  
If these faces are but masks, or you the masks for  
    them.

Faces too grotesque for laughter,  
Faces too shattered by pain for tears,  
Faces of such ugliness  
That the ugliness grows beauty.

They will haunt you morning, evening,  
Burning, burning, ever returning.  
Their own infamy creating,  
Till you strike at life and hate it,  
Burn your soul up so in hating.

I will scrawl on the walls of the night  
Faces,  
Pitiless,  
Flaring,  
Staring.

## *A Life*

Her life was like a swiftly rushing stream  
Green and scarlet,  
Falling into darkness.

The seasons passed for her,  
Like pale iris wilting,  
Or peonies flying to ribbons before the storm-gusts.  
The sombre pine-tops waited until the seasons had  
passed.

Then in her heart they grew  
The snows of changeless winter  
Stirred by the bitter winds of unsatisfied desire.





D.P. LeRue



## *Dead Thoughts*

My thoughts are an autumn breeze  
Lifting and hurrying  
Dry rubbish about in a corner.

My thoughts are willow branches  
Already broken  
Motionless at twilight.

## *A Comparison*

My beloved is like blue smoke that rises  
In long slow planes,  
And wavers  
Over the dark paths of old gardens long neglected.

## *Mutability*

The wind shakes the mists  
Making them quiver  
With faint drum-tones of thunder.

Out of the crane-haunted mists of autumn,  
Blue and brown  
Rolls the moon.

There was a city living here long ago,  
Of all that city  
There is only one stone left half-buried in the marsh,  
With characters upon it which no one now can read.

## *Despair*

Despair hangs in the broken folds of my garments;  
It clogs my footsteps,  
Like snow in the cherry bloom.

In my heart is the sorrow  
Of years like red leaves buried in snow.

## *The Lonely Grave*

Pilgrims will ascend the road in early summer,  
Passing my tombstone  
Mossy, long forgotten.

Girls will laugh and scatter cherry petals,  
Sometimes they will rest in the twisted pine-trees'  
shade.

If one presses her warm lips to this tablet  
The dust of my body will feel a thrill, deep down in  
the silent earth.









## *Part IV*



## *Evening Sky*

The sky spreads out its poor array  
Of tattered flags,  
Saffron and rose  
Over the weary huddle of housetops  
Smoking their evening pipes in silence.

## *City Lights*

The city gleams with lights this evening  
Like loud and yawning laughter from red lips.

## *Fugitive Beauty*

As the fish that leaps from the river,  
As the dropping of a November leaf at twilight,  
As the faint flicker of lightning down the southern  
    sky,  
So I saw beauty, far away.

## *Silver Jars*

I dreamed I caught your loveliness  
In little silver jars:  
And when you died I opened them,  
And there was only soot within.

## *Evening Rain*

Rain fell so softly, in the evening,  
I almost thought it was the trees that were talking.

## *Toy-Boxes*

Cities are the toy-boxes  
Time plays with:  
And there are often many doll-houses  
Of which the dolls are lost.



## *Moods*

A poet's moods:

Fluttering butterflies in the rain.

## *Grass*

Grass moves in the wind,  
My soul is backwards blown.

## *A Landscape*

Land, green-brown;  
Sea, brown-grey;  
Island, dull peacock blue;  
Sky, stone-grey.

## *Terror*

Because of the long pallid petals of white chrysan-  
themums  
Waving to and fro,  
I dare not go.

## *Mid-Summer Dusk*

Swallows twittering at twilight:  
Waves of heat  
Churned to flames by the sun.

## *Evening Bell from a Distant Temple*

A bell in the fog  
Creeps out echoing faintly  
The pale broad flashes  
Of vibrating twilight,  
Faded gold.

## *A Thought*

A piece of paper ready to toss in the fire,  
Blackened, scrawled with fragments of an incomplete  
    song:  
My soul.

## *The Stars*

There is a goddess who walks shrouded by day:  
At night she throws her blue veil over the earth.  
Men only see her naked glory through the little holes  
in the veil.



## *Japan*

An old courtyard  
Hidden away  
In the afternoon.  
Grey walks,  
Mossy stones,  
Copper carp swimming lazily,  
And beyond,  
A faint toneless hissing echo of rain  
That tears at my heart.

## *Leaves*

The splaying silhouette of horse-chestnut leaves  
Against the tall and delicate, patrician-tinged sky  
Like a princess in blue robes behind a grille of bronze.





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